

General Board of Higher Education & Ministry
Division of Ordained Ministry
**“Making Disciples
for the Transformation of the World” Project
Guidelines for BOMs**



Requirements & Standards for Fruitful Disciple-Making/World-Transformation Projects

As part of their requirements for ordination, provisional clergy members are to present a project “that demonstrates fruitfulness in carrying out the church’s mission of ‘making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world’” (see ¶¶ 330.4 and 335 in *The United Methodist Book of Discipline*).

The Book of Discipline does not prescribe specifics for this requirement, so Boards of Ordained Ministry have flexibility in how to implement it. Following are suggested guidelines for Boards of Ordained Ministry as they prepare project requirements and evaluation standards.

Defining the two-part goal

The mission has two distinct but related parts: “making disciples of Jesus Christ” and “transformation of the world.” The BOM may want to clarify:

- **The BOM’s definition of “making disciples.”** Inviting people into a faith commitment? Engaging laypeople in faith-formation activities that deepen their relationship with God and God’s people? Both? Other?
- **The BOM’s definition of “transformation of the world.”** Advocacy for justice for a marginalized community? A community ministry that improves the lives of neighbors by addressing basic needs, education, safety, child welfare, neighbor relations, or other wellness/wholeness need identified by neighbors or ministry constituents? Intentional Christ-like life practices and commitments that inspire others? Other?
- **The interrelatedness of these two parts**

Choose a Bible verse to illustrate the definitions. Examples: Is. 58:6-12, Luke 1:46-55, Matt. 22:34-40.

Project scope

The processes the provisional member used to identify and pursue the project are essential focuses of the BOM’s evaluation—perhaps more than the “success” of the project.

These factors may be part of the provisional member’s planning and the BOM’s evaluation:

- **The member’s engagement of others**, particularly those who will participate in or benefit from the project, in helping to identify a project.
- **The relationship of the project to the ministry goals** of the congregation, the conference, or the provisional member.
- **The relevance and clarity of the project’s purpose.** The Lewis Center recommends that the project and its goal(s) can be expressed through a **“so-that statement”**: “The formula for a ‘so that’ statement is, ‘We will do X so that Y happens.’ For example, ‘beginning a new choir’ in and of itself is an accomplishment but not necessarily a fruitful one. The question is not, ‘Did you begin a choir?’ but rather, ‘Is the new choir accomplishing the outcome for which the choir exists on behalf of the church’s mission?’” Thus an appropriately stated project may be, “Starting a community children’s choir for the neighborhood latch-key children so that they enter into caring relationships with the church members and learn about Jesus.” **The goals should relate to making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.**

- **The project’s feasibility.** The SMART analysis is one way to frame this:
 - Specific (and strategic): Answers the questions “who” and “what?” Identifies a relationship to the church’s or the individual’s ministry goals.
 - Measurable: Answers the question “how?” The success toward meeting the goal can be measured.
 - Attainable: The project’s goal is realistic and can be achieved in a specific amount of time and with the resources (time, people, funding) available.
 - Relevant: The goals are aligned with current tasks and projects and focus in one defined area. State the expected result.
 - Time/Term: The project takes place over an identified time frame, including a target or deadline date. The BOM should identify an approximate time frame for the project. Include some flexibility; perhaps six to 18 months. (Leave room for preparation and reporting.)

Context

Projects should be prepared and evaluated in a way that is relevant to the provisional member’s appointment—be that in the congregation, extension ministry, or beyond the local church. Provisional elders and deacons who are appointed to congregations will likely plan projects that lead a congregational ministry.

Deacons appointed beyond the local church might design projects that bridge the congregation to the needs of the world. Provisional elders in extension ministry might develop a ministry that enhances the ministry already provided in the appointment setting. Examples:

- A provisional deacon appointed to an agency that helps people find employment might plan a project that trains and deploys church members as mentors and supportive companions for clients.
- A provisional elder in hospital chaplaincy might develop a process for helping families manage the social-service system and connect them to faith-based support groups.

Strategy

The provisional member should be able to:

- **List the steps taken** toward fulfillment of the project and explain why they chose these steps.
- **Identify who they enlisted** to participate in helping and why.
- **Explain the timeline** for the project.
- **Describe mid-course evaluations, obstacles, and adjustments.**

Reporting

What: The BOM will need to determine **what questions the provisional members will need to answer about their project.** Possibilities:

- Project’s purpose and “so-that” statement
- Strategic steps toward putting the project idea into action
- Provisional member’s self-evaluation. How did the provisional member measure achievement of the project’s goal? Was the goal achieved? How did they solicit feedback from participants? What feedback did they receive? What did the provisional member learn from the experience (whether they achieved the goal or not) and how will they apply those lessons to their future ministry?

How: The BOM will need to determine *how* it wishes the provisional members to report on their projects. Some possibilities:

- Narrative description during the ordination interview
- On-site visit (will the BOM want to interview project participants at such visits?)
- Written report in advance of the interviews. (What questions should the report answer? What is the page length? When is the report due? Will the BOM require testimonials?)
- Non-written formats, such as a PowerPoint™ presentation, a video, or a web site. (When would these reports be due? What questions must these reports answer?)

Communication

The BOM should draw up a document, to be distributed to provisional members soon after they are commissioned, that explains specifically what the project entails: reiteration of the Disciplinary requirement, the BOM's interpretation of the two-part goal and any supportive Bible verses or other theological foundation, the scope and deadline of the projects, the reporting requirements, and the bases for evaluation.

This document can be the same as BOM members receive as they prepare to evaluate the projects, or be a part of the BOM's internal evaluation instrument. For the sake of clear communication, **the BOM should be transparent about their expectations and evaluative processes for this project.**

The BOM may consider asking provisional members to submit proposals for their projects for BOM/BOM committee advance approval. The BOM may prepare a template that describes what the proposals should include. This could prevent misunderstandings about the appropriateness of a project late in the process.

Residency in Ministry

This project can be a very practical learning experience for clergy. BOMs may consider adding to the Residency in Ministry curriculum some training, coaching, and reflection on these projects. Possible approaches:

- Training sessions on identifying, organizing, and motivating volunteers; demographic research; project management; etc.
- Presentation/discussion on strategic planning and how to apply it to the project's development and implementation.
- Presentations to and responses from peers in the covenant groups.